

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application as amended. Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 10-12, 15-17, and 22-29 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 12, 15, 22, and 26 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

In the Office Action, claims 22-29 were objected to be dependent upon a rejected base claim. In this response, claims 22 and 26 have been amended as independent claims incorporating substantially all the limitations of their respective base claims. Given that claims 23-25 and 27-29 depend from claims 22 and 26 respectively, claims 22-29 are allowable. Claim 15 has been amended to depend from claim 12. Applicant thanks the Examiner for pointing out the errors.

Claims 1 and 10-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,185,825 of Shigematsu et al. ("Shigematsu"). Applicant submits that claim 1 includes limitations that are not taught by Shigematsu. Specifically, claim 1 includes a first plate having a plurality of v-shaped grooves to hold a set of optical fibers and a second plate having a v-shaped groove to hold a secondary optical fiber, where the second plate being disposed and movable with respect to a surface of a base member and the first plate to enable an optical coupling of the secondary optical fiber to one of the set of optical fibers. Applicant submits that the above limitations are absent from Shigematsu.

The Examiner contends that item 121 of Shigematsu reads on the first plate while item 141 reads on the base member of claim 1 of the present application. However, item 121 of Shigematsu does not include a plurality of v-shaped grooves to hold a set of optical fibers, as evident by item 121 shown in Figures 14A-14B of Shigematsu. In contrast, both first and second plates of claim 1 include v-shaped grooves to hold at least one optical fiber, which is absent from Shigematsu. Therefore, claim 1 is not anticipated by Shigematsu.

Given that claims 2, 4-7, and 10-11 depend from claim 1, for the reasons similar to those discussed above, claims 2, 4-7, and 10-11 are not anticipated by Shigematsu.

Claims 2, 4, and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shigematsu in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,943,456 of Buchholz et al. ("Buchholz"). Claims 5 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shigematsu and Buchholz in view of U.S. Patent No.

6,421,153 of Way et al. ("Way"). Claims 6 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shigematsu, Buchholz, and Way, and in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,108,467 of Naraoka et al. ("Naraoka"). Claims 7 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shigematsu in view of U.S. Patent Application 2001/0041026 of Steinberg et al. ("Steinberg").

Applicant submits that none of the above cited references, individually or in combination, discloses or suggests the limitations of a first plate having a plurality of v-shaped grooves to hold a set of optical fibers and a second plate having a v-shaped groove to hold a secondary optical fiber, where the second plate being disposed and movable with respect to a surface of a base member and the first plate to enable an optical coupling of the secondary optical fiber to one of the set of optical fibers, as claimed in independent claims 1 and 12 of the present application. As a result, for at least the reasons set forth above, independent claims 1 and 12 are patentable over the cited references.

Given that the claims 2, 4-7, 10-11, and 15-17 depend from one of the above independent claims, for at least the reasons similar to those discussed above, claims 2, 4-7, 10-11, and 15-17 are patentable over the cited references.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits the present application is now in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite or assist in the allowance of the present application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (408) 720-8300.

Please charge Deposit Account No. 02-2666 for any shortage of fees in connection with this response.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 10/8, 2003



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